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Atari Online News, Etc.
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->From the Editor's Keyboard           "Saying it like it is!"
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When it rains, it pours - so the old adage claims! Well, I'm still proof that the old saying is quite true! Family issues continue to be a royal pain in the butt, and then some. Health issues continue to be a problem, but slowly improving now that I have some ideas as to what those issues are. But, everything continues to take its toll, the most aggravating point. I guess we just have to deal with them and continue to try and move forward.

The fall weather continues to be quite pleasant. The leaves are changing colors slowly in our area - some more rapidly than others. I've mulched some leaves during routine lawn-mowing, but haven't really had to do much more to clean up. Maybe this weekend, I'll take a look around the yard to see if I need to begin this annual autumn "tradition" - cleaning up the leaves. Hopefully, by this time next month, we'll be done with it all.

So, let's just get passed all that and get to this week's issue!

Until next time...

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

Why Wait for The PS4 To Launch When You Can Check It Out Right Now?

It has been seven years since Sony released the PlayStation 3, and this week you can finally get your hands on its successor. Sony has set up demo kiosks all around the U.S. so that gamers can get their hands on the PlayStation 4 weeks before its November 15th launch. According to the PlayStation Blog, the first wave of kiosks can be found at Sony Stores, but other retail locations, such as GameStop, Walmart, Target and Best Buy will also feature units in the coming weeks. The games that will be available for sampling include Knack, Octodad: Dadliest Catch, FIFA 14, Contrast, Super Motherload, and Pinball Arcade. Check and see if a kiosk is in your area at the Experience PlayStation site.

Valve Shows Off Strategy, First-Person, And Mouse-Driven Steam Controller Gameplay

The Steam Controller is different than the gamepads we are used to using with consoles. The trackpads are designed to mimic mouse movement with additional, mappable functions intended to give users access to keyboard functions.

Unfortunately, when Valve first announced the controller, there was no example of how it might actually look in use, nor were there hands-on impressions from developers or media. The company is trying to rectify that, and we've highlighted some developer responses to the device (which have largely been positive).

Now, we finally get to see how the Steam Controller is used in four different titles: Portal, Civilization V, Counter-Strike GO, and Papers, Please. You can check out the video below.

Our Take

I'm slowly warming to the idea of the Steam Controller, but I'm not sold yet. I still want to see a multiplayer match in an FPS with a Steam Controller user hanging in with mouse and keyboard players.

I also don't see the Civilization V map-scrolling demo as the best way to show off how the game works with a strategy. There is so much more to that game than just scrolling around the map.

I'm eager to see more of these videos and actually hold and use one of these. Valve still has a way to go to sell me on this, and this video is a good first step.

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NSA Delayed Anti-leak Software at Base Where Snowden Worked

The U.S. National Security Agency failed to install the most up-to-date anti-leak software at a site in Hawaii before contractor Edward Snowden went to work there and downloaded tens of thousands of highly classified documents, current and former U.S. officials told Reuters.

Well before Snowden joined Booz Allen Hamilton last spring and was assigned to the NSA site as a systems administrator, other U.S. government facilities had begun to install software designed to spot attempts by unauthorized people to access or download data.

The purpose of the software, which in the NSA's case is made by a division of Raytheon Co, is to block so-called "insider threats" - a response to an order by President Barack Obama to tighten up access controls for classified information in the wake of the leak of hundreds of thousands of Pentagon and State Department documents by an Army private to WikiLeaks website in 2010.

The main reason the software had not been installed at the NSA's Hawaii facility by the time Snowden took up his assignment there was that it had insufficient bandwidth to comfortably install it and ensure its effective operation, according to one of the officials.

Due to the bandwidth issue, intelligence agencies in general moved more slowly than non-spy government units, including the Defense Department, to install anti-leak software, officials said.

NBC News reported earlier this year that Snowden, who has been charged with espionage but was granted asylum in Russia, took advantage of antiquated security systems to rummage through the NSA's computer systems but details of the lapses in Hawaii have not previously been reported.

A spokeswoman for the NSA declined to discuss details of the agency's schedule for installing anti-leak software in Hawaii. She said the agency has had to speed up its efforts to tighten security in the wake of Snowden's disclosures.

"We open our facilities only after we have met all of the necessary regulatory, statutory, and infrastructure requirements," the spokeswoman said. "NSA has a very large, diverse and complex IT infrastructure across our global enterprise, and many features of that infrastructure evolve over time as new capabilities are developed, refined, and deployed."

She added: "NSA and the Intelligence Community at large have been moving forward with IT efficiency initiatives for several years. ... The unauthorized disclosures have naturally compelled NSA and the rest of the IC to accelerate the timeline."

Raytheon had no immediate comment.

In December 2010, the White House created a task force, headed by a former senior intelligence officer, to develop plans and systems to tighten access controls for classified information.

One of the specific initiatives announced by the White House for spy agencies was the installation of a program described as "Enhanced Automated, On-Line Audit Capability: Systems will monitor user activity on all IC classified computer systems to detect unusual behavior."

The NSA Hawaii facility, known as a Remote Operations Center, opened in January 2012, replacing an older site located in a nearby World War II-era facility. The facility is focused on intercepting communications from Asia, and the Washington Post has reported that it also is involved in operations in cyberspace such as mapping adversaries' computer networks and implanting electronic beacons.

Snowden was assigned by Booz Allen Hamilton to the Hawaii facility in late March or early April 2013, after first attending training sessions near NSA's Maryland headquarters.

He was only there for a few weeks before he told his employers that he needed time off because of health problems. Snowden then disappeared and turned up several weeks later in Hong Kong. There, he gave a TV interview and a trove of secrets from the NSA and its British counterpart, Government Communications Headquarters, to writer Glenn Greenwald, filmmaker Laura Poitras, and journalists from Britain's Guardian newspaper.

Reuters reported in August that Snowden began downloading documents describing the U.S. government's electronic spying on an earlier job working for Dell Inc in April 2012.

One official said Congressional oversight committees had repeatedly expressed concerns to the administration that agencies across the government, including spy units, had moved too slowly to install updated security software.

Another official said that U.S. agencies were still not positive they knew the details of all the material which Snowden had downloaded and turned over to journalists.

Aaron Swartz's Legacy Lives On: SecureDrop Is A WikiLeaks for Any Journalist

In May, The New Yorker revealed what hacktivist Aaron Swartz was building before his untimely death: an encrypted dead drop system that would let whistleblowers leak documents to journalists without fear of exposing their identity. The New Yorker launched its own implementation, Strongbox, and other media outlets were free to do the same but in August, noted security researchers at the University of Washington reported that DeadDrop wasn't quite ready for primetime, citing issues installing and using the software among many other things. That's where Aaron Swartz's legacy stood until today.

Today, the Freedom of the Press Foundation has announced that it has taken over the project, specifically hiring computer security expert James Dolan full-time to maintain the code, help media organizations install the software, and teach them how to use it well. The organization plans to address "virtually all" of the recommendations made by the University of Washington security researchers, and says it's already addressed a number of specific issues that were pointed out. While the Freedom of the Press Foundation is clear that SecureDrop isn't 100 percent secure, the organization says that it's the safest method for communicating with anonymous sources yet, and hopes to make it safer still. If you're interested, you can contribute to Aaron Swartz's open-source legacy at this Github repository.

Ebay Founder To Launch Independent Mass-market News Venture

EBay Inc founder Pierre Omidyar on Wednesday said he is building an independent media organization covering news from sports to politics for mainstream readers, spearheaded by big names including ex-Guardian correspondent Glenn Greenwald.

Omidyar, the 46-year-old French-born Iranian-American who remains chairman of the e-commerce giant he founded, wrote in a blog post that he considered buying the Washington Post - which Amazon.com Inc founder Jeff Bezos eventually snapped up - but decided he wanted to build a news organization from the ground up.

"Right now, I'm in the very early stages of creating a new mass media organization. I don't yet know how or when it will be rolled out, or what it will look like," he wrote.

"I developed an interest in supporting independent journalists in a way that leverages their work to the greatest extent possible, all in support of the public interest. And, I want to find ways to convert mainstream readers into engaged citizens. I think there's more that can be done in this space, and I'm eager to explore the possibilities."

Omidyar's active Twitter feed suggests he is very concerned about government-spying programs exposed by Greenwald and former U.S. government contractor Edward Snowden. In his blog post, Omidyar spoke of his growing interest in the role that journalism plays in society, and his own support of efforts to promote government accountability and transparency.

Omidyar, who is no longer involved in day-to-day operations at eBay, stressed that his venture would remain separate from his numerous philanthropic, business and political interests, run mainly through an entity called the Omidyar Network.

Forbes pegged Omidyar's net worth at \$8.5 billion. Among his ventures is Honolulu Civil Beat, a news website covering public affairs in Hawaii. Civil Beat aims to create a new online journalism model with paid subscriptions and respectful comment threads, though it is unclear how successful it has been.

Omidyar also founded the Democracy Fund to support "social entrepreneurs working to ensure that our political system is responsive to the public," according to its website.

Omidyar added that Greenwald's former colleagues, Laura Poitras and Jeremy Scahill, would also join his media project.

"I'll be sure to update you along the way as the new organization progresses," he said.

Twitter Unveils Option to Receive Direct Messages From Anyone

Twitter is now giving users the option to receive direct messages (DMs) from any other Twitter user, according to a tweet today from marketing blogger Jim Connolly.

That means, for example, that you now have a direct path for your digital fanmail to your favorite celebrity if they have the new feature enabled.

Connolly's tweet today included a small screen capture of how it appears in his options.

Normally, DMs on Twitter are restrictive. They are kind of like vampires, and just as Dracula can't come into your house without an explicit invitation first, people sending DMs require that you follow them in order for the message to be sent. However, the new option, which appears in a user's Twitter account settings, lifts this requirement.

Connolly sees the option as benefitting brands and businesses rather than individual users. "People complain all the time about bad customer service experiences over Twitter," he told ABC News. "Now, those grievances can be dealt with privately from the business end."

Though there are some cases when individuals may find it useful, such as members of Congress learning the concerns of its citizens, Connolly sees the option as tailored specifically to businesses. "Pretty much every sizeable brand has a social media team," he said. "They now have a tool that they couldn't have dreamed of before to help them."

Recent policy changes concerning privacy and identity at Google and Facebook have stirred up some ill will among users. Unlike those companies, however, Twitter has made it so users need to opt in to the feature to receive DMs rather than toggling it off after receiving a flood of DMs from people they don't know. "If it had been an opt out option, it would have been mayhem," said Connolly.

Twitter did not immediately respond to ABC News' request for comment. However, some have claimed that the DM announcement is actually old news, citing an article from The Next Web.

Connolly himself has turned the option on and was surprised at how well it's been working. "I've had about 150 DMs since I wrote a post about it this morning," he said. "One hundred percent of them have been legitimate. No spam. No weird people. Just people who know who I am."

Facebook Lifts Restriction on Teen Users Sharing With Public

Facebook Inc removed a restriction for users under 18 that previously limited who could see their online postings from photos to musings on the world-wide social network.

The No.1 online social network said that teenagers would now be able to manually alter the setting and share information with the public. Until now, a teenager's postings on Facebook were only viewable to their friends, and to the friends of their friends.

However, Facebook said on Wednesday the default setting when teens do share information on the 1.15 billion user network would go out to a narrower group of people.

"Teens are among the savviest people using of social media, and whether it comes to civic engagement, activism, or their thoughts on a new movie, they want to be heard," Facebook said in an announcement of the changes.

"While only a small fraction of teens using Facebook might choose to post publicly, this update now gives them the choice to share more broadly, just like on other social media services," the company said.

The change comes as Facebook faces increasing competition from a new crop of mobile and social services, such as SnapChat and WhatsApp, that have proven popular with younger users.

Jeffrey Chester, Executive Director of the non-profit Center for Digital Democracy, said that Facebook was sacrificing the safety and privacy of teenage users in order to further its business.

"Teens don't necessarily have good judgment and to the extent that they make themselves visible to the wider public, there's all kind of people - from predators to junk food marketers - who are surveilling Facebook for new kinds of targets," Chester said.

Other social media services also allow teens to share information with the broader public. But Chester noted that the amount of personal information that users have on Facebook is far more extensive than on other social services, where users can create accounts with pseudonyms.

Facebook said that teenage users will also now be allowed to use the "Follow" feature, which lets strangers automatically receive public posts from another user without requiring that the two be connected on the service as mutual "friends."

Nicky Jackson Colaco, Facebook's manager of privacy and public policy, said that the changes would allow teenagers to share information that might benefit from dissemination to a broader audience, such as information about fundraising efforts, or a teen rock band trying to promote an upcoming performance.

Malala Yousafzai, the 16-year-old Pakistani activist, would not have been able to use Facebook as a broad communication channel under the previous policy, noted Stephen Balkam, of the Family Online Safety Institute, a non-profit that receives funding from several Internet companies, including Facebook.

Facebook said it would show teenage users a special notice the first couple of times they attempt to post information to the public, reminding the user that the post can be seen by anyone.

The restrictions on teen use of Facebook's private messaging feature will not change, with users under 18 only able to receive messages from their friends and from the friends of their friends.

How To Opt Out of Google Policy That Displays Your Photo Beside Ads

The day after Facebook announced that it was removing a privacy option that would make all of its users searchable, Google made its own announcement for adding an option called "Shared Endorsements."

The new option would display Google users' names and profile pictures beside advertisements for businesses and products that they've endorsed with a review, a +1, or even a follow. Google account holders were concerned about how these changes could be exploited, but Google is giving its users the option to opt out early.

Unlike Facebook, which exists only as a social network, though one with over a billion users, Google+ is tied to many other online services. "Your Google username and password let you access lots of useful things," Google said in its official announcement, Such as "your Gmail messages, Google+ photos, YouTube videos, Google Contacts list and more."

That interconnectivity is convenient for quick access, but also raises some concerns since each service can have its own account settings. However, Google has made it easier for its users to maintain privacy than Facebook's recent policy change by explicitly giving its users a way to opt out.

To do so, users can visit the appropriate webpage through Google's announcement and follow it to the appropriate settings. For those who want to share the news with friends or family but don't want to deal with sending long links to follow, the option can also be accessed from a Google user's account settings. Clicking on the "Google+ tab" on the left sidebar will bring up the Shared Endorsements option.

Opting out of Shared Endorsements will keep users from having their identity publicized in advertisements, but it may not extend far beyond that. "This setting only applies to use in ads, and doesn't change whether your Profile name or photo may be used in other places such as Google Play," said Google. Google did not respond to ABC News' request for comment.

However, some Google users are making their own statement and turning Google's new ad policies on its head. Instead of opting out, they are replacing their own profile photo with one of Eric Schmidt, Google's executive chairman. The thought behind the profile swap is that if enough Schmidt photos are seen beside the advertisements, Google will be made aware that enough people care about the privacy concerns behind Shared Endorsements to remove it all together.

Then again, it wouldn't be surprising if Google put its facial detection software to use and just filtered out any advertisement with Schmidt's photo.

Google Sets Plan To Sell Users' Endorsements

On Friday, Google announced an update to its terms of service that allows the company to include adult users' names, photos and comments in ads shown across the Web, based on ratings, reviews and posts they have made on Google Plus and other Google services like YouTube.

When the new ad policy goes live Nov. 11, Google will be able to show what the company calls shared endorsements on Google sites and across the Web, on the more than two million sites in Google's display advertising network, which are viewed by an estimated one billion people.

If a user follows a bakery on Google Plus or gives an album four stars on the Google Play music service, for instance, that person's name, photo and endorsement could show up in ads for that bakery or album.

Luckily, we have an opt-out. Go to this page (<https://plus.google.com/settings/endorsements?hl=en>), remove the checkmark at the bottom of the page, and done - Google won't be abusing your personal information for endorsements.

Microsoft Releasing Windows 8.1, A Year in Making

Microsoft is releasing its long-awaited Windows 8.1 upgrade as a free download starting Thursday. It addresses some of the gripes people have had with Windows 8, the dramatically different operating system that attempts to bridge the divide between tablets and PCs.

Windows 8.1 still features the dual worlds that Windows 8 created when it came out last October. On one hand, it features a touch-enabled tile interface resembling what's found in tablet computers. On the other, there's the old desktop mode where the keyboard and mouse still reign. The update adds some new finger- and gesture-friendly shortcuts for touch-based apps, while restoring some respect for the desktop mode that a billion PC users have become accustomed to.

The release comes as sales of traditional desktop and laptop computers continue to decline because consumers are spending money instead on the latest smartphones and tablets. It also comes at a time of transition for Microsoft as the Redmond, Wash., company focuses on devices and services, not just software. Earlier this month, Microsoft struck a deal to acquire Nokia's phone business and patent rights for more than \$7 billion. Microsoft is also searching for a new CEO to replace Steven A. Ballmer, who announced last month that he plans to retire within the next year.

The Windows 8.1 update is free for current owners of Windows 8. It's available starting at 7 a.m. Thursday in New York, which corresponds to the start of Friday in New Zealand. Simply go to the Windows Store app to find it. It may take a few hours for updates to reach everyone. Computers with Windows 8.1 already installed will go on sale Friday local time. That's also when people will be able to buy stand-alone copies of Windows 8.1.

The changes range from the cosmetic to improved functionality:

RESTORING RESPECT FOR THE DESKTOP

START ME UP The Start button is back in desktop mode, although not the way it was before Windows 8 came along. In Windows 7 and before, a click on Start would have brought up programs and important folders in a list. Now, one tap on Start flips you back to the new tile interface, where you can click or tap tiles to open programs. A long press brings up crucial settings such as the Control Panel.

BOOT TO DESKTOP You can now start up the machine in desktop mode, bypassing the tiles for a short time. That removes some of the headache

for companies that want to use Windows 8 but don't want to buy a touch-screen monitor for every employee.

TOUCH AND GESTURE UPDATES

ONSCREEN KEYBOARD SWIPES The onscreen keyboard now includes the ability to type numbers or punctuation marks by swiping up or away from certain keys on the standard "QWERTY" layout, eliminating the need to toggle between numeric and alphabetic layouts. You can also select from suggested words mid-stream using side swipes and taps on the virtual spacebar.

GESTURE-ENABLED APPS You can now wave in the air in front of the front-facing camera to get a response. For example, in the new app Bing Food & Drink, a right-to-left wave in "Hands Free Mode" flips through pages of a recipe.

QUICKER TILE ORGANIZING You can tap and hold Windows tiles with your finger to move them. Another couple taps will allow you to resize them in one of four sizes. In the previous version, you had to go back to the mouse or touchpad and right-click on tiles to do this, and you were limited to two sizes.

EASIER APPS ACCESS Finding all your apps takes just a swipe up on your start screen, as long as you don't do it from beyond the bottom edge. Before, you had to swipe up from the bottom edge, then tap on the All Apps button.

SMALL CONVENIENCES

AUTOMATIC UPDATES Apps update in the background, replacing the constant reminders to go to the Windows Store to update the apps yourself.

SMALLER TABLETS Windows 8.1 now has a home screen that looks good in portrait mode on screens measuring 7 inches to 8 inches diagonally.

LOCK SCREEN ACCESS You can now answer Skype calls or take photos from the lock screen without having to log in. Just swipe down. You can also set other apps like Twitter to send notifications when the screen is locked.

FUNCTIONAL CHANGES

BETTER MULTITASKING In Windows 8.1, you can run up to four apps at once side by side, double the previous amount, though you need a large, high-resolution monitor to do so (On their own, Microsoft's Surface tablets are not big enough for more than two). You can resize panes using a slider that moves side to side, instead of being limited to one larger window and one slender one. This is still not as capable as Windows 7 or in desktop mode, where you can open dozens of items in windows that can be resized horizontally, vertically and diagonally. And many app makers have yet to adapt, meaning some apps still appear as a thin sliver, even if you want them to take up half the screen.

GLOBAL SEARCH Typing while on the tile-based start screen will pull up multiple search results if applicable from your computer, the Web and the Windows app store. If you're searching for a musician, you'll see a list of popular songs you can play using Xbox Music, and if it's someone famous (like President Barack Obama) you'll see biographical details, videos and other information. Before, you had to choose where to search:

in apps, settings, computer files or on the Internet.

EMAIL UPDATE The standard-issue Mail app now has a "power pane" on left-hand side with folders for updates from social networks like Facebook, messages from favorite contacts and newsletters. Some of these features work only with Microsoft accounts such as Hotmail and Outlook.com, though. A new "sweep" command deletes multiple messages with a couple taps.

BETTER BROWSING No longer are you limited to 10 open tabs in the tile version of Internet Explorer. Before, Web pages automatically closed without prompts when you try to open more. You can open as many as you want now. Better yet, you can have two different websites displayed side by side, the way you've long been able to before Windows 8 came along.

FUN STUFF

XBOX MUSIC REFRESH The music streaming app now optimizes playback over discovery with a layout that has more lists and smaller photos. It also adds the ability to create playlists from any website with a couple taps. When on a website featuring artists, swipe in from the right edge and tap the Share button followed by the Music button. It will create a song playlist based on those artists, which you can then stream for free.

PICTURE EDITING A picture editor with pre-set effects comes with the update, allowing for photo touchups, cropping, contrast changes and other features.

XBOX ONE INTEGRATION You can pick up where you left off if you start playing a video purchased on Xbox Video on a tablet and then watch the rest on Microsoft's upcoming game console, Xbox One.

Microsoft Windows 8.1 Now Available for Download

Windows 8 users, your free update along with your "start" button are ready for pickup.

This morning, Microsoft began making Windows 8.1 available for download through the Windows store. Windows 8 users will begin seeing the update in the store and can download it over the Internet.

Devices, including tablets, laptops and desktops, that run the software will be available in stores Friday, Oct. 18. A boxed version of the software will be out then, too.

The update addresses a series of gripes users have had about the software since it was first introduced about a year ago. While most of the operating system still will be centered around a "start screen" of apps or live tiles, Microsoft is bringing back the "start" button to the main, traditional desktop to help users adjust to the interface change.

The "start" button will appear in the lower, left-hand corner of the desktop and allow users to return to that home screen of apps. Users will also be able to set the machine to boot up automatically to the traditional desktop interface.

That home screen will also see some changes. Users will have more options

for the size of the tiles and they will have more background and wallpaper customizations to choose from. Microsoft also improved the multitasking feature that allows users to run apps side by side. App sizes will be more flexible now and users will be able to run as many as four on the screen at the same time.

Apps will continue to be at the front of the experience. Both the design of the Windows store and some of the core Microsoft apps have been refreshed. The revised mail app will include more sorting options and better organizational tools, the camera app will have a panorama setting and there will be new "food & drink" and "health & fitness" apps. Additionally, Bing Web search will be integrated right into the search field, so when you begin searching it will surface local and Web results.

Many new additions also make it easier to use the touch-centric operating system with a mouse and keyboard and make it simpler overall to learn how to use the software with on-screen prompts. While the changes might not convince some to adopt Windows, it will improve the experience for those who are using it.

"If you haven't bought into mixing desktop and touch interfaces, it won't convince you, at least not until Office is available in the touch environment," Ross Rubin, principal analyst for Reticle Research, told ABC News. "Those who have bought in will notice a more flexible interface and some new features."

But ultimately Rubin pointed out that Windows 8 is still an in-between point for Microsoft, something that is paralleled by the company's presence in the technology industry as it searches for a CEO to replace Steve Ballmer and plans to complete its purchase of Nokia.

As Rubin said, "Microsoft is still on a transition journey."

Google Will Update Chrome for Windows XP Through 2015, Beyond Microsoft's Support

Microsoft may be ending Windows XP support in just six months, but Google wants to breathe just a little more life into the old OS. Google announced today that it'll be continuing support for Chrome on Windows XP through at least April 2015—a full year after Microsoft stops issuing security patches on XP. As Google notes, the browser is a major point-of-attack for malware, and by using an updated browser, XP users might be able to keep their systems safe for just a little while longer.

Though XP is over a decade old, the metrics firm Net Applications pegs it as one of the most popular operating systems around today, second only to Windows 7. For Google, the move could help get businesses on board with using Chrome, as many begin or try to finish a prolonged upgrade of their computers to Windows 7, which still seems to be the go-to operating system for business machines.

Google also hasn't been shy about its attempts to use the Chrome browser as a Trojan horse for Chrome OS. It's begun building Chrome OS right into Windows 8, and while it hasn't attempted that anywhere else just yet, creating an insulated Chrome-only environment could further prolong the life of an XP machine should Google choose to expand the feature. But continuing support is hardly just a matter of making a name for itself on

XP: with so many people still using it, there's a good chance that Google would be leaving plenty of existing Chrome users out to dry if it left the OS alongside Microsoft.

Lenovo's Sub-\$300 Full Windows Tablet

The Miix 2 might not boast an iPad's build quality but at just \$299 it is cheaper than any Apple tablet and offers the full desktop version of Microsoft Windows 8.1.

When Intel CEO Brian Krzanich announced earlier this week that the cost of consumer electronics devices was set to tumble thanks to the latest generation of Intel processors, he clearly wasn't exaggerating.

The Lenovo Miix 2 is an 8-inch full Windows tablet with optional stylus support. Though not in the premium band, the IPS display offers an 800x1280 pixel resolution and a 178° viewing angle. Inside, there's an Intel Bay Trail quad core processor, and up to 128GB of storage, plus a microSD slot for a further 32GB of expansion. It has front (2 megapixel) and rear (8 megapixel) cameras, weighs just 350g and even comes with the Family and Student edition of Microsoft Office pre-installed.

"Many users want the convenience of a smaller screen tablet, but do not want to lose the performance and convenience of a powerful, quad core Windows 8.1 device. With the Lenovo Miix2 8-inch, users can take advantage of a small, light form factor without sacrificing performance," said Bai Peng, vice president and general manager, notebook business unit, Lenovo Business Group.

But perhaps most impressive is the price. At just \$299 it is cheaper than most notebook computers yet, when paired with a wireless keyboard offers the features and functionality of a computer.

The Miix 2 will launch later this month and as well as upgraded internal storage, will also be offered with an optional cover and stylus at extra cost.

Backdoor Found in D-Link Router Firmware Code

A backdoor found in firmware used in several D-Link routers could allow an attacker to change a device's settings, a serious security problem that could be used for surveillance.

Craig Heffner, a vulnerability researcher with Tactical Network Solutions who specializes in wireless and embedded systems, found the vulnerability. Heffner wrote on his blog that the Web interface for some D-Link routers could be accessed if a browser's user agent string is set to `xmlset_roodkcableoj28840ybtide`.

Curiously, if the second half of the user agent string is reversed and the number is removed, it reads "edit by joel backdoor," suggesting it was intentionally placed there.

"My guess is that the developers realized that some programs/services

needed to be able to change the device's settings automatically," Heffner wrote. "Realizing that the Web server already had all the code to change these settings, they decided to just send requests to the Web server whenever they needed to change something.

"The only problem was that the Web server required a username and password, which the end user could change. Then, in a eureka moment, Joel jumped up and said, 'Don't worry, for I have a cunning plan'!"

The technology industry has been rattled by documents leaked by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden, which indicate the spy agency pursues ways to subvert security measures through backdoors. But developers sometimes make mistakes and in other cases, make poor security decisions.

With access to a router's settings, an attacker could potentially steer someone's Internet traffic through another their own server and read their unencrypted data traffic.

To find other vulnerable D-Link router models, Heffner used a special search engine called Shodan, which is designed to find any device connected to the Internet, ranging from refrigerators to CCTV cameras to routers.

The affected models likely include D-Link's DIR-100, DI-524, DI-524UP, DI-604S, DI-604UP, DI-604+, TM-G5240 and possibly the DIR-615. The same firmware is also used in the BRL-04UR and BRL-04CW routers made by Planex, Heffner wrote.

A Web search turned up the suspicious user agent string in a post on a Russian forum three years ago, Heffner wrote, which means somebody has known about it for a while.

D-Link officials could not be immediately reached for comment on Monday.

Is The Millennial Generation Turning Its Back on Technology?

A global survey towards high-tech attitudes finds that while the younger generation believes technology is having a dehumanizing effect, older women, particularly those in emerging countries, are becoming its biggest champions.

The Intel-commissioned "Intel Innovation Barometer" survey of 12,000 adults from Brazil, China, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan and the United States finds that while Millennials (i.e., those aged 18-24) haven't completely given up on technology and believe that it holds the key to one day solving a number of global issues, 61 percent believe that it is currently making people less human. Despite being the digital native generation, 59 percent of young adults also feel that society has become too reliant on technology.

"At first glance it seems millennials are rejecting technology, but I suspect the reality is more complicated and interesting," said Dr. Genevieve Bell, anthropologist and director of Interaction and Experience Research at Intel Labs. "A different way to read this might be that millennials want technology to do more for them, and we have work to do to make it much more personal and less burdensome."

Indeed, over one-third of the younger generation (36%) want technology to become more intuitive and contextually aware so that systems, services and devices learn about users and anticipate their needs over time.

This would also explain why Millennials are the most willing age group when it comes to anonymously sharing personal information and data because it will improve user experience. But as well as disappointment with the current state of tech, the younger generation is overwhelmingly positive about the role it could play in the future and have great hope that innovations will positively impact education (57%), transportation (52%) and healthcare (49%).

The current enthusiasm that the younger generation lacks is more than made up for by that of older women. Globally, women over 45 years of age are slightly more likely than younger women to say that people don't use enough technology. They also are more likely to say that technology makes people more human, helping to deepen their relationships.

This positive attitude peaks in emerging markets. For example, in China, 70 percent of women over 45 believe we aren't using technology enough, while across China, Brazil, India and Indonesia women of all ages believe innovations will drive better education (66%), transportation (58%), work (57%) and healthcare (56%). Women in emerging markets would also be more willing to sacrifice some privacy in return for better tech services - 86 percent would be willing to install software that tracks their work habits and 77 percent would be happy to use a smart toilet if it monitored health.

"Women historically have become avid users of technology when that technology solves a problem, helps us organize our lives and that of our families as well as aids us in saving time and time shifting," added Bell. "I have to wonder whether this data is showing that women are optimistic because they see technology innovation that is starting to deliver on the promise of better fitting into the rhythms of our days, helping with our specific concerns and needs, and creating new compelling experiences that women and men alike will find valuable."

But as well as along gender lines, the willingness to share data is more pronounced in high-income households - 81 percent of high-income individuals would be prepared to anonymously share lab results and other medical information if it would further scientific research into illnesses. Only 66 percent of those on low incomes (and 71 percent of mid-income respondents) are prepared to do the same. However, when asked if they would be prepared to share this information in return for low-cost medication, the figure for low-income respondents jumps to 80 percent.

Council in California City Endorses Apple Campus Plan

Apple's plans for a massive new campus in Silicon Valley that co-founder Steve Jobs likened to a spaceship have cleared a major hurdle.

The San Jose Mercury News reports the City Council in Cupertino, where Apple's current headquarters is also based, unanimously approved the estimated \$5 billion project on Tuesday.

Plans call for nearly 3.5 million square feet of new office space, a

1,000-seat auditorium and a fitness center on the 176-acre campus. Apple would demolish existing office and research and development buildings.

The main, ring-shaped building would be a little more than 2.8 million square feet alone. The project is expected to be completed in 2016.

The city's planning commission gave its endorsement earlier this month and the project only needs one more largely perfunctory vote from the City Council next month.

Apple now employs about 16,000 people in and around Cupertino.

Flossie, The 50-year-old Computer, To Be Resurrected

Efforts to reboot one of the oldest surviving mass-produced computers are under way in Milton Keynes.

The National Museum of Computing has taken delivery of what it believes is the last ICT 1301 computer to ever have a chance of working again.

The machine - known as Flossie - had originally been used to produce exam results for students at the University of London.

The museum hopes to put it on display by 2016.

One of its trustees said Flossie was one of the first computers specifically designed for use by UK businesses rather than scientific institutions.

"Before this time, computers were absolutely huge with valves and thousands of vacuum tubes and would get incredibly hot, making them difficult to house in a normal business," Kevin Murrell, a trustee of the museum, told the BBC. Flossie being unloaded The museum acknowledges that the machine is likely to have been damaged in transit

"But this machine used transistors, which used very little power. That meant you could have more of them in the same space, you didn't need the complex cooling equipment and you wouldn't require the high power that earlier computers needed."

ICT 1301s had a footprint of about 6m by 7m (20ft by 23ft) and weighed some five tonnes. They came with a punch card reader and printer built in to their body, which were used to enter and save data by means of creating a series of holes in a piece of stiff paper.

"For medium-sized companies that wanted to computerise their invoicing, their accounting or their payroll, this gave them the help to do that," added Mr Murrell.

The University of London bought its machine in the 1960s and used it for accounting and administration tasks in addition to generating GCE examination results for students in England and Wales.

It was later sold at scrap metal value to a group of students before eventually ending up at a farm in Kent, whose owner donated the machine to the museum.

Other editions of the machine were later used as props thanks to their arresting design. Doctor Who, the Pink Panther and the James Bond movie The Man with the Golden Gun all featured ICT 1301s.

Over the years more than 150 computers were created, but the charity said it was only aware of three others being left in existence, all of which are beyond repair.

"One of the problems with computers as museum artefacts is that when they are switched off they are fairly boring - it's fairly difficult to learn anything from them," explained Mr Murrell.

"So ideally we want it switched on, and once we've restored it we will be able to run the original software.

"We will have caused some damage in the move, so we need to deal with that, but I think in about three years' time we will have a properly demonstrable machine."

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